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House GOP: Gov's flip-flop on COVID response is too-little, too-late for many in NM

Santa Fe – Following Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's last-minute holiday scramble to provide COVID-19 relief to businesses and unemployed New Mexicans, the Governor is now reversing course on her statewide approach. The Governor will now implement a "county-by-county, three-tiered" system for evaluating and responding to the out of control coronavirus spread. Unfortunately, this reversal is too little, too late, and this new standard will likely be impossible to reach for some.

"The Governor's revised strategy to combat COVID-19 using county-by-county data is an acknowledgment that her prior eight months long one-size-fits-all policy has been a failure that is devastating to working families and small businesses," said House Republican Leader Jim Townsend (R-Artesia). "While we appreciate she is taking a new approach that looks at each county differently, the fact remains, her reopening standards are so high it will be months before any of our 33 counties can fully reopen."

Despite having the strictest standards in the nation, the Lujan Grisham administration has failed to contain the spread of the virus in any meaningful way. Additionally, under the new "county-by-county" standard, the state will still essentially run under a one-size-fits-all methodology for determining any reopening. Rural counties with smaller populations and greater geographic size will have to follow the same standards for reopening as those from more urban and densely populated counties.

"We have recently learned that Johns Hopkins University predicts that New Mexico will not be even close to reopening until April 2021- that's five months away and unacceptable," said House Republican Whip Rod Montoya (R-Farmington) "To suggest that the Governor is changing her policy to satisfy Republican demands, is setting the stage to blame conservative New Mexicans when her policy fails. Her new policy continues to keep every county perpetually under lockdown, even if and when they reach ZERO new cases. Her best case scenario is for businesses to operate at 50% with no serious plan for post-COVID recovery."

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